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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/626,345	07/26/2000	Everett E. Schulze JR.	80010	8442

22442 7590 03/15/2002

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EXAMINER

LE, THIEN MINH

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2876	5

DATE MAILED: 03/15/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.	09/626,345	Applicant(s)	SCHULZE, EVERETT E.
Examiner	Thien M. Le	Art Unit	2876

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.  
2a) This action is FINAL.                            2b) This action is non-final.  
3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

4) Claim(s) 1-31 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) Claim(s) 1-31 is/are rejected.  
7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
11) The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.  
    If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.  
12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120**

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
    a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:  
        1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
        2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.  
        3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).  
    \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.  
14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).  
    a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.  
15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

**Attachment(s)**

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                            4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_.  
2) Notice of Draftsman's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                    5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)  
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2,3.                    6) Other: \_\_\_\_.

## DETAILED ACTION

The information disclosure statements filed on 7/26/2000 and 8/28/2000 have been entered. Claims 1-31 are presented for examination.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rando et al. (hereinafter Rando – RE37,166).

Rando acknowledges the use of a POS terminal for accepting coupons, an auxiliary unit for verifying the coupons, and the method for reimbursing the retailers. However, Rando fails to specifically disclose that the retailers will be reimbursed within five days after the each coupon accepting transaction. It would have been obvious to reimburse the retailer within five days. The examiner is of the view that this is strictly a

"business rule" which does not add any limitation to the underlying inventiveness features of applicant's invention.

Regarding claim 2, see the discussions above. Also see col. 3, lines 1-30 of Rando.

Regarding claim 3, see col. 3, lines 1-30 of Rando. The claim differs in calling for the step of storing the coupons in a secure lock box. It would have been obvious to incorporate the limitations in Rando's system. Though Rando describes in col. 2, lines 1-30 the step of shredding and inking the validated coupons, storing the coupons at a secure place is also another conventional technique which is often be used by manufacturers or clearing houses. Thus, the modification is merely a substitution of a common practice with another is well within the skill levels and expectations of an ordinary skilled artisan.

Regarding claims 4-5, see the discussions above.

Regarding claim 6-31, see the discussions above. Specifically, the steps of not reimbursing the retailers for invalidated coupons, etc. would be have been included in the systems as discussed above (also read col. 3-17 of Rando).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thien M. Le whose telephone number is (703) 305-350. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday from 7:30am - 4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Lee can be reached on (703) 305-3503. The fax phone numbers

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for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-5841 for regular communications and (703) 308-7722 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.



**Le, Thien M.  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2876  
March 11, 2002**